

WASHINGTON STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

OFFICE OF FARMLAND PRESERVATION NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2010

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 10

Whatcom County awarded farmland planning grant



The Washington State Office of Farmland Preservation recently awarded Whatcom County with a farmland preservation technical assistance grant of \$25,000 for the development of farmland preservation programs. Whatcom County is one of eight grant recipients statewide.

Grant funding will be used to coordinate and integrate the County's efforts through the development of an agricultural strategic plan.

The elements of the agricultural strategic plan will include: Updated GIS information to include more detailed data on what land is in farming, farm infrastructure, residential and other uses; Outreach activities to the community including elected officials, citizens, farmers and landowners; Defining and identifying strategic farmland for protection through updated Purchase of Development Rights applicant evaluation criteria; Developing implementation strategies and methodologies for the tools identified by the Agricultural Advisory Committee; and Funding options.

Whatcom Farm Friends Executive Director Henry Bierlink said "Whatcom's farmers rely on a wise and fair County government role in land use and water management decisions. This grant provides needed resources to ensure that County policies work in concert with farmer's needs."

Grant funding is provided through the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, a statewide grant program administered by the Recreation and Conservation Office.

Did you know that Whatcom County is the number three county in the United States with total planted acreage in berries? In 2007, there were 11,379 acres of land in berries! Whatcom County's total value of agriculture in 2007 was \$326 million up 13% from 2002.

Private lands to get boost from WDFW grant

Private landowners in Washington will have a greater incentive to open their land to hunters, thanks to a new federal grant announced recently by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Under the new federal grant program, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) will receive \$837,000 to support development of land-use agreements with landowners who voluntarily make their land available to hunting and other forms of outdoor recreation.

WDFW plans to use the USDA grant to support projects that provide incentives to:

- Private landowners who allow waterfowl hunting, big game hunting and wildlife viewing in Whatcom, Skagit and Snohomish counties.
- Private forest landowners who allow hunting in Lewis, Cowlitz and Wahkiakum counties.
- Private landowners who allow hunting for pheasant and other wildlife found in fields in Whitman, Garfield, Columbia, and Walla Walla counties.
- Farmers who leave corn stubble untilled through the winter for waterfowl food and allow hunting in Grant and Franklin counties.



For more information, go to: [Private Lands Access program](#). For the full announcement go to: [WDFW News Release](#)

Stay in contact and sign up for the OFP-Newsletter!

Send an e-mail addressed to jgiuntoli@scc.wa.gov with the subject title:
"add to Newsletter"

Email frequency is around one a month

Comments being solicited for “Water Smart Washington”

At the direction of the Washington State Legislature (ESSSB 6267), Ecology recently prepared a [report on water resource functions and funding structures](#), along with recommendations to make the Water Resources Program more self-sustaining and efficient. The 6267 Report to the Governor and Legislature serves as the foundation for a major water management reform proposal, “Water Smart Washington.” It represents Ecology’s best thinking on how to actively manage water now and into the 21st century.

Ecology [released the draft legislation](#) and opened up a process whereby the public can provide feedback. The “Water Smart Washington” legislation reforms the state’s water code in six areas: Review of water rights; Relinquishment; Water budget and information; Watershed management; and initiates water resources service fees:

For information on each of these six reforms, you can view a fact sheet by going to: [Focus on Water Resources Reform \(PDF\)](#)

To provide comments, on the proposed “Water Smart Washington” go to: [Ecology online commenting form](#)

WA 2009 Agricultural Value Declines 8% from 2008

The Washington State National Agricultural Statistics Service recently announced that the value of Washington’s 2009 agricultural production had reached \$7.27 billion (including government payments), 8 percent below the 2008 revised figure of \$7.92 billion.

Washington saw record high values set for hops, grapes, sweet corn, mint oil, dry edible beans, wrinkled seed peas, alfalfa seed and apricots. The value of the State’s hop crop rose to \$264 million compared with the previous record high of \$259 million set in 2008. Grape growers contributed \$210 million to the State’s agricultural economy. Sweet corn’s value jumped to over \$173 million.

To view the top forty commodities, go to: Top 40 Commodities 2007-2009 [10/20/2010: Top 40 Commodities, 2007-2009](#)

New and Beginning farmer opportunity

Let Us Farm in Oakville, WA has an immediate opportunity for young farmers with potential for long-term partnership.

This farm is a converted 80-acre dairy located along the Chehalis River. It is a productive organic mixed vegetable farm. Produce is sold through farmers markets and the Olympia Food Cooperative. Current farmers Steve and Cecelia strive for sustainability through utilizing summer and winter cover crops and field rotations; conservation tree planting and habitat strips.

A successful sustainably oriented farm, they have land, water, equipment and good markets. They seek younger partners to keep the land in organic production. Potential for growth and expansion as experience grows. They are a certified organic vegetable operation with greenhouses and high tunnels, ample equipment and are located mid-way between Seattle and Portland in the fertile Chehalis Valley. Housing and intern quarters on farm.

For information on this unique opportunity, contact: Steve Hallstrom at letusfarm@earthlink.net or 360-273-9280

Cultivating Regional Food Security Conference

Register now for the Cultivating Regional Food Security Conference at the University of Washington Botanic Gardens Center for Urban Horticulture **December 4-5, 2010**, with the goal of increasing collaboration among community leaders and residents to create a more sustainable regional food system in terms of production, land use and equitable access to food.

Co-hosted by the UW Botanic Gardens and WSU Extension, the conference brings together a diverse audience including urban gardeners, agriculture organizations and policy-enacting legislators. Nearly three dozen speakers will present emerging research on topics ranging from urban soils, food markets, urban/rural economic interdependence and public health. Work groups will outline post-conference initiatives.

To register and find out more including an agenda, go to: <http://depts.washington.edu/uwbgb/news/food-security/>

New guide for farmers and ranchers released.



American Farmland Trust

SAVING THE LAND THAT SUSTAINS US

American Farmland Trust recently released the Farmers and Ranchers Guide to Environmental Markets. For the guide and more information, go to: [Farmers & Ranchers Guide to Environmental Markets](#)

The guide explains the current status of these markets and opportunities that exist for farmers and ranchers — what these markets can be worth, what must be done to sell services, and who is buying. It also provides practical guidance on how to participate, along with a comprehensive list of potential buyers, informational websites, other literature, and key government agencies for those interested in learning more. The guide is focused on Washington State, but can be applicable for farmers and ranchers across the country.

In addition to the guide, American Farmland Trust will be conducting 6 free workshops in November across the state. These are designed to help Washington farmers, ranchers, and conservation professionals understand how to be paid full value for reduced greenhouse gasses, improving water quality, restoring wetlands, protecting wildlife habitat, conserving water, generating renewable energy, or other environmental values. What are these markets? How do they work? How much are they worth? What do I have to do to provide these services? Are there risks? Where can I find further information? Attendees will get answers to these questions and more and will also receive a personal copy of the newly-completed “Farmers & Ranchers Guide to Environmental Markets.”

Wenatchee

Monday, November 8, 2010, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30
Cascadia Conservation District,
215 Melody Lane, Wenatchee, WA 98801

Walla Walla

Tuesday, November 9, 2010, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30
Walla Walla Regional Airport,
Terminal Bldg, 45 Terminal Loop Rd, Walla Walla, WA

Spokane

Wednesday, November 10, 2010, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30
Spokane Conservation District,
210 N. Havana, Spokane, WA 99202

Yakima

Tuesday, November 16, 2010, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30
North Yakima Conservation District,
1606 Perry St. Suite C, Yakima, WA 98902

Mt. Vernon

Wednesday, November 17, 2010, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30
Skagit County Commissioners Hearing Room,
1800 Continental Place, Mt. Vernon, WA 98273

Tumwater

Thursday, November 18, 2010, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30
Thurston Conservation District,
2918 Ferguson St. SW, Ste. A, Tumwater, WA 98512

In short - In short - In short

Grass Beef Webinar now available

Grass-finished beef is part of a growing niche market of farm products that can command higher market prices and bring more to a farmer's bottom line. During this hour-long webinar you'll learn how farmers, large and small, are using more pasture and less grain to produce high-quality meat products and how they compete in the marketplace.

View the webinar by going to:

<http://attra.ncat.org/video/>

Support your local pumpkin farmer!

Interested in taking your kids or grand-kids to a farm for some pumpkin fun? Go to: [Pumpkin Patches and More](#) to find a farm near you.



Check out this corn maze at [Rutledge Farm](#) in Thurston Co. honoring Captain Phil Harris!

Small Farms Alternative Enterprises Conference Proceedings Online

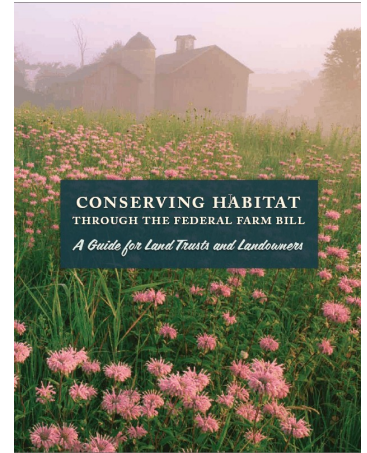
The proceedings of the 2010 Florida Small Farms Alternative Enterprises Conference held July 31-August 1 are now available online. Speaker presentations on Alternative Energy, Alternative Enterprises, Business and Marketing, Horticulture, Livestock, and Organic and Sustainable Farming are all accessible through the [conference website](#).

New publication for land trusts and landowners

National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition recently announce the release of a new publication - [Conserving Habitat through the Federal Farm Bill: A Guide for Land Trusts and Landowners](#).

This is a comprehensive and practical guide for farmers, ranchers, land trusts and other landowners who want to increase wildlife habitat on their land. The Guide provides:

- A concise introduction to the Farm Bill and its conservation programs, the agencies involved and general eligibility requirements.
- Detailed and accessible information on each of the most relevant conservation programs offered through the 2008 Farm Bill that can be used to improve wildlife habitat conservation.
- Time-saving tips for choosing the right program for your conservation and biodiversity goals, navigating the application process, and increasing the competitiveness of your applications to improve the chances of securing funding.
- Recommendations on how to use the Farm Bill strategically and how to participate in Natural Resource Conservation Service State Technical Committees and other opportunities to help shape the implementation of the Farm Bill programs and have a voice in local priorities.
- Case studies, provided by farmer, ranchers, and other landowners and by conservation organizations, that illustrate how land managers have concretely and creatively leveraged Farm Bill dollars to maximize wildlife and habitat benefits.



The guide is available as a pdf document which can be accessed and downloaded from the NSAC website [by clicking here](#).

Good Agricultural Practices workshop offered

Many farmers are seeking information about good agricultural practices in response to recent disease outbreaks associated with produce. This course will provide specific information regarding on-farm produce food safety (Good Agricultural Practices, GAPs).

Several commodity groups have established guidelines for good agricultural practices; however, differences in recommendations leave producers wondering how to proceed. Speakers represent a multi-disciplinary group of WSU faculty and regulatory agencies and will offer science-based information.

A series workshop will be offered around Washington including Yakima County (Nov. 3), the Olympic Peninsula (Dec 2), Snohomish County (Dec. 3), and Skagit/Whatcom counties (January 12-14). All attendees need to visit the [food safety web-site for registration](#) and updated information:

For more information contact: Karen Killinger, Ph.D. - WSU Asst. Professor (509)335-2970 or karen_killinger@wsu.edu

Water law and case study CLE opportunity

Fundamental Water Law and a Case Study of the Columbia River System - November 29-30, 2010 - Spokane, Washington

When water supply diminishes, successful solutions depend upon fundamental knowledge of water law, entitlement and use. This two-day course presents these topics with the objective of enhancing the capabilities of professional natural resource managers and serves as a strong foundation for a range of water topics. Participants will discuss and analyze natural resource attributes, legal infrastructure, and current problems. Water law in relation to endangered species, water markets, energy, fisheries, interface between state and federal laws, international law, and unconstitutional regulatory takings of interest in water will be discussed. Finally, innovative models generated from resolution of water conflicts in the Columbia River system and the interface between water quality and quantity objectives will be included.

For more information, go to: [Seminar - Fundamental Water Law and a Case Study of the Columbia River System](#)

Washington awarded funding for farmers market promotion



USDA's Farmers Market Promotion Program recently announced over \$4 million in grants to 34 states. Washington state was awarded over \$150,000 for two projects intended to help connect farms with families at the local level.

Over the past five years, this grant program has awarded over \$14 million to local farmers in the US so they can grow their income and grow their ability to make fresh, healthful food available to more families across the country – particularly in underserved communities.

\$79,408 was awarded to the North Olympic Peninsula Resource Conservation and Development Council, Port Angeles, WA, to implement a new Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) project, improve access to fresh food from local farms for citizens of rural Jefferson and Clallam Counties, and increase the economic viability of local farmers in the area.

\$87,509 was awarded to the Washington State Farmers Market Association, Suquamish, WA, to 1) develop an updated and expanded Market Management Tool Kit, 2) purchase and distribute promotional brochures, and 3) convene 3 strategic planning sessions for the Washington State Farmers Market Association Board of Directors.

For more information on the Farmers Market Promotion Program, go to: [USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program](#)

Ruckelshaus Center releases Agriculture and Critical Areas Final report

The Agriculture and Critical Areas Committee has completed their final report and developed recommendations for a stewardship program that builds on existing programs. To view the report, go to:

<http://ruckelshauscenter.wsu.edu/>

KING 5 Northwest Backroads covers Willie Greens Farm

Willie Green's Farm was growing fresh organic baby greens before most people knew what they were. Today they supply Farmers Market's and CSA customers (with fresh winter produce boxes!) all over the Puget Sound Area. View the 5 minute feature by going to:

[KING 5 Northwest Backroads](#)

Mark your calendars!

Free Water Rights Workshop - Nov 2 3:00 - 7:00 PM, Mercer Island

This free workshop will answer your questions about accessing water for irrigation and stock watering, provide an overview of water law in Washington, when water rights are required, how the state issues water rights, and protecting rights for agricultural purposes.

Workshop will be held at the Mercer View Community Center, 8236 SE 24th Street, Mercer Island, WA - Tuesday, November 2, 3:00 - 7:00 PM

Click [here](#) for the agenda.

For more information or to register, please contact Steven Evans, 206-296-7824 or steve.evans@kingcounty.gov

Ebey's Forever Conference & Community Event - November 5-6

Keynote by Anthea Hartig of the National Trust for Historic Preservation exploring how preserving a community's culture and history can lead to developing a desired future. At Camp Casey Conference Center.

For more information, email Emi Gunn at emi_gunn@partner.nps.gov

[Click here for registration](#)

Organicology Conference - Feb. 10-12 in Portland, Oregon

Registration is now open for this three-day event, a gathering of the organic food community – including seed producers, farmers, processors, distributors, retailers, researchers, educators, chefs and policy activists – that will offer intensives, workshops, networking and a trade show, with informed, inspiring and engaging keynote addresses from field experts.

For complete conference information, including registration, lodging, a schedule of intensives and workshops, visit

<http://www.organicology.org/organicology/Welcome.html>

WASHINGTON STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Public meetings on water quality scheduled



The Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) is holding a series of public meetings to discuss potential changes to the state's surface water quality standards.

The public meetings will begin with a presentation and question/answer period, followed by a formal hearing to allow public testimony. All meetings at the following locations begin at 1:30 p.m.

Submit written comments at the meeting, by hard copy or email to Ecology by midnight December 17, 2010. Email comments to swqs@ecy.wa.gov, or mail them to Becca Conklin, Water Quality Program, Washington Department of Ecology, P.O. Box 47600, Olympia, WA 98504-7600.

Nov. 4, Lacey Community Center,
6729 Pacific Ave. SE., Lacey, WA

Nov. 15, Washington State School for the Blind,
2214 E. 13th St., Vancouver, WA

Nov. 9, Spokane Regional Health Building,
1101 W.College Ave., Spokane, WA

Nov. 16, Skagit Transit Station,
105 E. Kincaid., Mt. Vernon, WA

Nov. 10, Ecology Central Regional Office,
15 W. Yakima Ave., Suite 200., Yakima, WA

Salmon Recovery Funding Board considers new policy

The Recreation and Conservation Office recently released for public comment a policy change in their Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) manual. The policy provides that project sponsors proposing to acquire real property that includes zoned agricultural land must provide the conservation district (CDs) in which the project is located notice of the number of zoned agricultural acres that are anticipated to be acquired as part of the proposed project. The purpose of this proposed addition is to increase communication and transparency by requiring early communication with the Conservation Districts.

Interested people and organizations are invited to comment on the proposed policy. Comments may be submitted via mail or e-mail and need to be addressed to Dominga Soliz c/o RCO, PO Box 40917, Olympia, WA 98504-0917 or e-mail RCOpolicy@rco.wa.gov. Comments will be accepted through November 3, 2010.

Office of Farmland Preservation

360.407.7474
Fax: 360.407.6215

VISIT US ONLINE!

<http://ofp.scc.wa.gov>



Farmland Preservation Task Force

Farmer Representatives

Jacob Anderson, South Central
Sheryl Cox, South East
Jeff Emtman, North East
Bob Hart, Chair, North West
Greg Schoenbachler, South West
Richard Thomason, North Central

County Commissioners

Don Munks, Western Washington
Rudy Plager, Eastern Washington

WA Association of Conservation Districts

Fred Colvin

Legislators

Senator Mary Margaret Haugen
Senator Jim Honeyford
Representative Joel Kretz
Representative Larry Springer

Non-Voting Members

Roylene Rides at the Door, USDA NRCS
Dee Caputo, CTED

State Agencies/Offices

Lynn Bahrych, Chair, Conservation Commission
Lee Faulconer, WA State Dept. of Ag.
John Mankowski, Governors Executive Policy

"OUR MISSION IS TO PROMOTE THE VITALITY OF FARMING, FARMERS, AND RANCHERS BY ENSURING THAT WE WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE PRODUCTIVE AGRICULTURAL LANDS IN WASHINGTON STATE. WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS THROUGH POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNOR, THE LEGISLATURE, THE OFFICE OF FARMLAND PRESERVATION AND OTHERS AND BY ENLISTING PUBLIC SUPPORT. PROGRAMS WILL BE VOLUNTARY, RECOGNIZE LOCAL PRIORITIES, AND PROVIDE FOR ECONOMIC INCENTIVES."